

ILLINOIS RIVERWATCH

A component of the Critical Trends Assessment Program

RiverWatch



Program Overview

Illinois RiverWatch is the stream monitoring component of the Illinois EcoWatch Network, a volunteer monitoring initiative coordinated through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). The program was originally established in 1993 by Lieutenant Governor Bob Kustra, expanding to the statewide

level work already being performed locally by numerous citizen stream monitoring groups. As Citizen Scientists, RiverWatch volunteers conduct biological monitoring and stream habitat surveys on wadable Illinois streams. Citizen Scientists not only learn about the ecology of stream ecosystems, but play a direct role in monitoring the health of their local river or stream.

Training for RiverWatch Citizen Scientists takes approximately 6-8 hours to complete, with follow-up practice and review workshops offered periodically throughout the year. Following an introduction to the EcoWatch Network, training in macroinvertebrate identification and field sampling techniques is provided during two training workshops. New Citizen Scientists are trained during one of several Open Regional Training Sessions offered on a regional basis during the spring and fall

of each year. Previously trained Citizen Scientists are also encouraged to participate in specially scheduled Citizen Scientist Review Sessions prior to each new monitoring season.

Illinois RiverWatch monitoring methods are a simplified version of professional stream monitoring techniques. Sampling protocols were developed by state scientists for use on stream ecosystems specific to Illinois. Monitoring consists of two parts: a stream habitat survey and a biological survey. The habitat survey involves recording a number of physical observations of the stream and surrounding riparian area, including: depth, width, velocity, temperature, turbidity and other habitat parameters. The biological survey consists of a random sample of benthic macroinvertebrates (aquatic insects, mussels, clams, snails, and worms) found within the stream community. Data collected by certified Citizen Scientists are

submitted to a statewide database that will be used by the scientific community to gauge long-term trends in the environment. The period of May 1 to June 30 is designated as the official statewide annual monitoring period for Illinois RiverWatch.

In addition to training and monitoring, Illinois RiverWatch conducts other activities designed to meet public education and environmental stewardship goals. These include acting as an informal referral

scheduling informational presentations to high school and community college science classes. A formal teacher training component for Illinois RiverWatch will be developed and piloted in 1997.

Since January 1995, over 500 Citizen Scientists have monitored more than 250 streams at 250 monitoring sites. Additionally, more than 1,300 volunteers have removed 35 tons of trash and other debris from Illinois streams. Many others have also partici-

"Through RiverWatch, Illinois unleashes Citizen Scientists throughout the state to help preserve and protect our rivers and streams. It is the potential of our human resources working to save our natural resources."

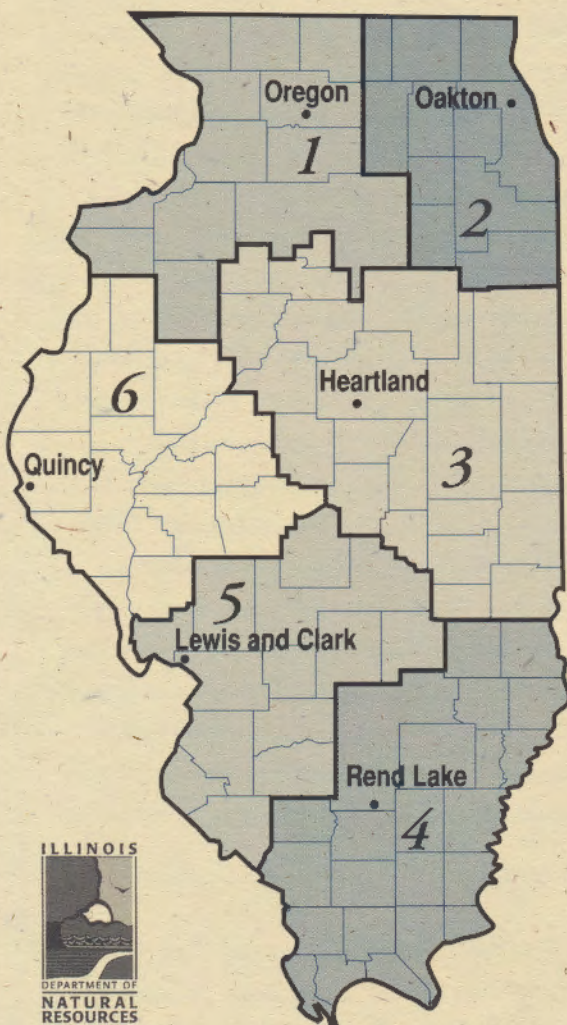
—Lieutenant Governor Bob Kustra

service for other IDNR programs and providing guidance to volunteer groups in organizing stream clean-ups, conducting stream habitat walks, and

pated in stream habitat walks or attended demonstration sessions, training workshops or educational presentations.

Help keep an eye on the environment— join Illinois RiverWatch today!

Additional information on this and other Illinois EcoWatch Network programs can be obtained by contacting one of the following EcoWatch Network Regional Offices:



Region 1

**Illinois Department of
Natural Resources
(ORE)**
200 W. Washington St.
Oregon, IL 61061
Tel (815) 732-4026
Fax (815) 732-4252

Region 2

**Oakton Community
College (OAK)**
1600 East Golf Road
Des Plaines, IL 60016
Tel (847) 635-6540
Fax (847) 635-1987
TDD: (847) 635-1779

Region 3

**Heartland Community
College (HCC)**
1226 Towanda Avenue
Bloomington, IL 61702
Tel (309) 888-4148
Fax (309) 827-8505
TDD (309) 829-3129

Region 4

**Rend Lake College
(RLC)**
RR 1
Ina, IL 62846
Tel (618) 437-5321 x259
Fax (618) 437-5677

Region 5

**Lewis and Clark
Community College
(LCC)**
5800 Godfrey Road
Godfrey, IL 62035-2466
Tel (618) 467-2328
Fax (618) 466-1202

Region 6

Quincy University (QCY)
1800 College Avenue
Quincy, IL 62301-6830
Tel (217) 228-5576
Fax (217) 228-5568
TDD (800) 526-0844

Statewide

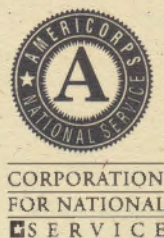
TDD (217) 782-9175

About the Illinois EcoWatch NETWORK

Illinois RiverWatch is a program of the Illinois EcoWatch Network, a statewide network of ecosystem-based volunteer monitoring programs coordinated by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Through programs such as RiverWatch, ForestWatch, PrairieWatch, WetlandWatch and UrbanWatch, adult volunteers and high school science teachers and students play a key role in the collection of ecological data used by scientists to monitor long-term trends in ecosystem health. In addition to widening the scope of citizen involvement in ecological research efforts, EcoWatch Network programs provide state scientists with comprehensive information to supplement professional scientific databases. The Illinois EcoWatch Network is part of the Critical Trends Assessment Program.

Contact the Illinois EcoWatch Network on-line at <http://dnr.state.il.us/inringif.htm>

The Illinois EcoWatch Network is an AmeriCorps National Service program and is part of the Critical Trends Assessment Program, an on-going process at the Department of Natural Resources to assess the extent and condition of Illinois ecosystems. This material is based on work supported by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Illinois Commission on Community Service, and the Corporation for National Service under AmeriCorps grant No. 94ASCI0141301. For more information concerning other Illinois AmeriCorps programs, contact the Illinois Commission on Community Service at 1-800-592-9896.



5000K 3/97 Printed on Recycled Paper.

Prepared by the Nature of Illinois Foundation for the Illinois EcoWatch Network.